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SUBJECT: ANKARA MEDIA REACTION REPORT,
FRIDAY, JULY 23, 2004

THIS REPORT PRESENTS THE TURKISH PRESS SUMMARY UNDER THREE
THEMES:

HEADLINES
BRIEFING
EDITORIAL OPINION

HEADLINES

MASS APPEAL

High-speed train `massacre' - Sabah
36 die for the sake of fast-train `show' - Milliyet
High-speed `murder' - Vatan
`Speedy' murder: 36 dead - Hurriyet
Report: 9/11 could have been prevented - Milliyet
Commission blames Clinton, Bush for `lack of imagination' -
Hurriyet
1993-2000 Clinton era was pinnacle for US economy - Sabah

OPINION MAKERS

Fast train speeds to disaster: 36 dead - Radikal
9/11 Commission puts the blame on US intelligence -
Cumhuriyet
9/11 Commission: US Administration `inept' - Radikal
Commission: 9/11 an institutional failure - Zaman
9/11 Commission acquits Bush - Referans
Bush will sell weapons to Iraq `for peace' - Cumhuriyet
Street fights in Baghdad, 25 Iraqis killed in Ramadi -Yeni
Safak
Blair considers dispatching troops to Darfur - Zaman
Israel opposes EU presence in Palestine - Yeni Safak
EU signals it may discard Arafat - Zaman
Arafat pledges to give full authority to Kurei - Radikal

BRIEFING

Turkish train derails, 36 killed: An express train
traveling from Istanbul to Ankara derailed on Thursday,
killing 36 people. Officials suspect the accident was
caused by a mechanical fault, and some observers blamed
Turkey's creaking rail system. Papers blamed the government
for the crash, saying it had ignored experts' safety
warnings when it launched the high-speed train link between
Istanbul and Ankara in early June. PM Erdogan rushed to the
scene of the disaster last night, and canceled his scheduled
trip to Bosnia-Herzegovina today while the investigation
continues. Opposition CHP leader called on the Government
to resign in the wake of the crash, and several commentators
called on the Transportation Minister and the head of
Turkish State Railroads to step down. Other press
commentaries warned potential problems at Turkish Airlines
(THY) due to insufficient aircraft maintenance.

Turks' views on the EU, NATO, GME, Israel: According to a
public opinion research by `Pollmark Research' concerning
`NATO and Turkish Foreign Policy,' 73.4 percent of Turks
support EU membership, while 21.2 are against it. The
research was carried out in various Turkish provinces
through one-on-one interviews with 1,636 people between July
2-4. 55 percent of Turks believe that Turkey is not ready
for EU membership. 69 percent see human rights as the
largest obstacle to Turkey's full EU membership, while 67
percent see poverty as a major negative factor that could
prevent Turkey from joining the European bloc. 47 percent
support Turkey's participation in NATO, while 16 percent are
opposed. 55 percent of respondents believe that other
Muslim nations should join NATO as well. 31 percent believe
the US Greater Middle East project will bring democracy to
the region, while 51 percent believe it will not. 43.8
percent view US as the largest obstacle to peace in the
Middle East, while 34.2 hold that view of Israel. 43
percent of respondents disapprove of attacks against US
troops in Iraq, while 42 percent approve. 81 percent agree
with PM Erdogan in blaming Israel for applying `state
terrorism.' 45 percent of those surveyed hold negative
views of Arabs, while 38 percent hold a positive view. 27
percent of respondents hold positive views of Christians,
while 51 percent view Christians negatively.

US `Africa Project': Islamist-oriented "Yeni Safak" claims
that the US Congress has endorsed a plan for the social and
cultural transformation of Muslim countries in Africa.

Basing its report on allegations put forward by the webpage 'Islam Online' and the South African news agency 'Inter Press Service,' 'Yeni Safak' claims that the Congress has allocated \$200 million for the project. In the near future, the US will be meeting 20 percent of its oil needs from African sources and will have to shift related investment to the region by 2015. The US is concerned about growing anti-American sentiment in West Africa and the Somali region. The US wants to 'nip Islamic movements in the bud' in this region with a population of around 300 million, according to the report. The American project targeting African Muslims is supported by both Democratic and Republican members of Congress, and former Deputy Secretary of State Walter Kansteiner and the deputy chief of US troops deployed in Africa, General Carlton Fulford, work for the committee that designed the project, 'Yeni Safak' claims.

FM Gul 'protects' Israel at regional meeting: The ruling AK Party government has been displaying its 'contradictions' in relations with Israel, 'Cumhuriyet' claims. At the 7th meeting of Iraq's neighbors held in Cairo on Tuesday, Iran and Syria pressed hard to include in the joint declaration allegations regarding covert Israeli activities in northern Iraq. However, Turkey warned against the danger of turning the summit into a public forum for criticizing Israel, which would have detracted attention from the problems in Iraq. FM Gul voted with other countries against inclusion of Israel's intelligence activities in the final declaration. Recently, FM Gul had conveyed to Seymour Hersh at a breakfast in New York important details outlining the Israeli operations in northern Iraq, 'Cumhuriyet' claims.

Turkish military to reduce troops: The economic/intellectual 'Referans' writes that the Turkish military decided in May to eliminate four brigades under a TGS project to creating a more 'effective and flexible' army. The new military would be smaller in number and equipped with high technology weaponry. Consequently, the TGS will reduce the number of Turkish troops by 18,000 this year, realizing an annual savings of TL65 trillion. The brigades to be eliminated are on Turkey's borders with Bulgaria/Greece, Armenia, and Iran, as well as a unit currently deployed in Central Anatolia. The Total number of troops in the Turkish military shrunk to 683,716, down from 800,200, following a cut of 17 percent in June last year. Observers expect the Aegean Army to be eliminated next year, to reflect the warming of relations with Greece.

EDITORIAL OPINION:

"Unresolved Problems"

Fikret Bila commented in the mass appeal Milliyet (7/23): "The aim of Prime Minister Erdogan's visit to France was to guarantee an accession date from the EU. He tried to do this by signing preliminary agreements for the purchase of Airbus aircraft and by signaling a willingness to cooperate with France on the development of nuclear energy plants. On his return to Turkey, PM Erdogan characterized the trip as a success, and said the French had 'lowered their defenses' regarding Turkey's EU accession. But even if Turkey had made no such gestures, the EU must give a date for accession talks. This is Turkey's right which was earned by fulfilling the Copenhagen Criteria. It is clear that the government gave more than what was necessary for the sake of EU accession. While Turkey has fulfilled every single demand of the EU, certain problems remain unresolved --the Cyprus issue and the case of the former DEP deputies, for example. What will the EU's stance be in the future on these issues? Turkey has accepted everything the EU and the US wanted on the Cyprus issue, but the problem is still there. The Greek Cypriots have become EU members, but the future for the Turkish side is unclear. The EU also pressured Turkey into meeting its demands in the DEP case. But it is not clear what the result of this process will be, and what its effects will be on Turkey's future political structure. It is obvious that Turkey has a long accession process in front of it even after it receives a date from the EU. There are signs that the EU's demands will continue during the course of this process. New EU demands could include the Armenian issue, expectations from non-Muslim religious sects, and more demands on ethnic issues. Turkey should move away from its inept approach. Turkey is in a strong position and definitely need not offer extra incentives to the Europeans."

"Will Turkey be Cheated in the Airbus Deal?"

Mustafa Balbay opined in the leftist/nationalist Cumhuriyet (7/23): "PM Erdogan has combined his foreign policy with trade policy. The PM's visit to France clearly reflected this approach. Erdogan guaranteed contracts to France in order to get France's support for Turkey's EU accession. THY signed an agreement with France to purchase 36 planes from Airbus. There is also an agreement with Boeing for 15 more planes. THY says they need the planes to renew their fleet. But there is some confusion over the real cost of the renewal process. THY says the Airbus purchase will cost

\$1.5 billion, while Airbus has announced the sale at \$2 billion. Other foreign observers have said the real cost could exceed \$3 billion. This is a difference of \$1-1.5 billion. THY is going to be privatized soon. Is the Turkish government trying to bribe prospective buyers of THY with 51 new airplanes? This is not a simple problem. Erdogan's 'win-win' policy may turn into 'cheat-lose' policy."

"US-Russia Coordination"

Erdal Guven wrote in the conservative H.O.Tercuman (7/23):
"The US is trying to cooperate with Russia in order to get out of the mess in Iraq. The US is exerting a great effort to try to escape Iraq prior to the US election. Misguided pre-war planning brought the US into this mess, as the US ignored Turkish power in the region. As the result of terrorism, Spain and the Phillipines have decided to withdraw their forces from Iraq. The US administration is left more isolated with every passing day. When US casualties started to mount, Bush's advisors looked into the possibility of postponing the US election. When Congress rejected this request, the Bush advisors started making new plans. The US has asked for 40,000 Russian troops and offered Russia a share in world trade and a share of the oil in the Caucasus. In fact, this request is like winning the lottery for Russia. The Russians have long dreamed of making an effective policy in the Middle East. Although Russia hasn't responded positively yet, they are very willing to help the US in this case. The US, in order to save itself, is ready to accept a life ring even from its enemies. If the US had allowed the Iraqis to choose their own government, the problem would have been solved easily. But just like in Somalia, the US chose to carry the country into chaos after the occupation and then pull out."

DEUTSCH